

VZCZCXYZ0020  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #0788 2311345  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 191345Z AUG 09  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5374  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 4132  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2534  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1646  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1066  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2221  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6352  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4541  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2562  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000788

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)  
SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - AUGUST 19

#### Leading Story

1. Opposition Deputy Gonzalo Arenas reacted aggressively against Minister of the Interior Edmundo Perez Yoma during his testimony at the Chamber of Deputies yesterday. Minister Perez Yoma was testifying on the violent events in Region Nine involving Mapuche indigenous, but his explanations did not fulfill Deputy Arenas' expectations. Deputy Arenas threw to the Minister's face the document pardoning a Mapuche leader who had been indicted for terrorist acts. (El Mercurio, conservative, influential, 8/19)

#### SOUTHCOM General Fraser in Chile

2. Interview with SOUTHCOM Commander General Douglas Fraser who is on an official visit in Chile. General Fraser was asked about the recent U.S. - Colombia defense cooperation agreement: "We need to be very specific... These are not U.S. bases. The United States does not need to have bases, and with this agreement it is not attempting to establish them," he told El Mercurio. General Fraser noted that the agreement regulates the U.S. longstanding cooperation with Colombia by supporting its "fight against narcoterrorism and the FARC." He explained that the bases will be controlled by Colombians who will decide which activities will be carried out. "Plan Colombia has been very successful, but what is important is that although Colombia has been successful --in reducing the number of kidnappings and homicides, and the country's atmosphere is good-- the fight hasn't ended. The FARC have decreased but they are still there, therefore it is necessary to continue supporting (Colombia's) efforts," he said. General Fraser also presented a multilateral focus to his mission as head of SOUTHCOM and pointed out the need to work with all Latin American countries to confront common threats. He ruled out a conventional military crisis in the region, but underscored his concern about the impact of transnational illegal trafficking and the potential implications for drug trafficking. "To me the main problem is security because (drug trafficking) is well financed and they have good weapons. We need to find a good way of dealing with that problem and the only way to do it is by working together. "We invite Venezuela to participate in exercises. They are openly invited to our schools. In the past we had good relations with Venezuela and we seek to recover them..." General Fraser noted that he is optimistic and that he sees great possibilities for cooperation with countries in the region. He emphasized, though, that each country must decide over its defense requirements. He said that the United States "would like the militaries to purchase U.S. equipment, I will not say that we wouldn't like that." (El Mercurio, conservative, influential, 8/19)

## U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement

---

13. Wire story reporting on Secretary Clinton's press conference with Colombian Foreign Minister Jaime Belaunder in Washington. Secretary Clinton noted that the agreement does not involve creating permanent U.S. bases in Colombia. She pointed out that the agreement "does not concern" other countries in the region. (La Tercera, conservative, independent, 8/19)

## UNASUR

---

14. The opposition Alliance is inclined to vote against Chile's membership in UNASUR. In the next few days, Chile's Foreign Ministry will try to reinitiate negotiations with the opposition in order to ratify by September the draft treaty that creates UNASUR. Last year, on August 19, 2008 the initiative was submitted to Congress for approval. The strong controversy unleashed two weeks ago by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in Quito has raised strong reticence among Chilean opposition senators. Chavez' remarks announcing "winds of war" in the region and the events in Quito are seen by Chileans as a threat that could damage the relations between South America and the Obama Administration. (El Mercurio, 8/19)

## SIMONS